

Meeting Date: January 17, 2013  
Page 1



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN  
**DELTA CONSERVANCY**

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## Executive Officer's Report January 17, 2013

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### **Program Update**

#### *Ecosystem Restoration*

Delta Restoration Network: The Delta Conservancy in collaboration with State and Federal agencies and the Delta community is developing an outline of the proposed Delta Restoration Network (DRN). This is a voluntary network to share information and improve coordination and integration of Delta restoration projects. The first DRN meeting was held on November 8, 2012 and individuals and organizations were identified to participate in this effort. The Delta Conservancy developed a diagram showing the organizations and main elements of the restoration network including strategic planning, tracking, land management, funding, and outreach.

The Conservancy, with other agency and local input, is preparing a statement of understanding and purpose that will describe the goal and objectives of the DRN and the role of the participants.

Restoration Projects - Coalition to Support Delta Projects: The Coalition to Support Delta Projects has prepared a near-term list of projects by working with stakeholders and federal, state, and local agencies. The Delta Conservancy has been identified as an appropriate agency to continue to convene this group and provide leadership in moving the restoration projects forward. The Conservancy will work with state and federal agencies, project partners and the Delta community to move projects forward, resulting in much needed near-term benefits.

Delta Restoration Outreach: The Delta Conservancy conducted an evening outreach event on November 14, 2012. The objective of this outreach meeting was to facilitate communication and understanding of the major current and planned ecosystem restoration and levee improvement efforts in the Delta and how the various state and federal agencies work together. In preparation, the Conservancy created a diagram to help clarify the relationships between the various entities involved in restoration in the Delta.

Meeting Date: January 17, 2013  
Page 2

Representatives from the agencies and programs involved in restoration provided an overview of their agency, their role in the Delta, and current and planned activities. The Conservancy will organize additional outreach meetings about water quality programs and other related topics to help the public better understand ongoing agency efforts in the Delta.

### *Economic Development*

Delta Branding Project: The Delta Branding Project—a Delta-wide collaborative process—will develop a Delta Brand and marketing plan to promote specialty crops in the Delta, the Delta as a destination, and the significance of the Delta to Californians. This effort will serve the following goals: 1) Support agriculture’s “Delta Grown” and other local branding efforts; 2) Achieve brand identification for the Delta as a destination; and 3) Educate Californians regarding the Delta’s value and significance to California and world economies.

Conservancy staff has applied for two federal grants and is meeting with State agencies, foundations, and local banks to raise the funds required to obtain marketing expertise to develop the Delta brand. While funding is being pursued, Conservancy staff is continuing to discuss the branding concept with the stakeholders and identifying other projects that will promote economic development in the Delta and the Delta as a destination. Over the past three months, Conservancy staff conducted interviews, performed research, and held several meetings with Delta Community members to introduce the Delta Branding concept, assess their interest, and to ask for suggestions and input to identify an effective process for a Delta Branding Project.

### *Education and Outreach*

Delta Creeks Clean Up: The Delta Conservancy has partnered with the Sacramento Area Creeks Council to develop the “creek clean up” concept in the Delta. The Conservancy is organizing a creek clean up event in the Delta as part of the Council Clean Up week in April 2013. The Conservancy is currently seeking funds for this project and planning to develop sites, teams, and publicity for 2013 events.

### **Partnership and Coordination with Other Agencies**

The Delta Conservancy is actively seeking to form partnerships and acquire funds to accomplish near-term projects. We continue to advance our efforts to establish a state partnership with Delta Community members, which is critical for future implementation projects.

Early Habitat Restoration: The Delta Conservancy has been working with NRCS, DWR, Ducks Unlimited, and other agencies and organizations to define a locally supported habitat enhancement program in the Delta. This program will focus on working with agriculture to enhance the habitat value of working landscape, and the implementation of an invasive species control program.

Meeting Date: January 17, 2013  
Page 3

The Conservancy is currently seeking funds from DWR to develop a coordinated Delta-wide Arundo donax eradication and restoration program in partnership with Team Arundo del Norte (TAdN) and the Sonoma Ecology Center. The Delta Conservancy proposed program describes the components of the program, project phases, and estimated costs.

### **Grant and Funding Programs Update**

The Conservancy is seeking grants for its ecosystem restoration, economic development, education, and outreach programs. The following is a list of the Conservancy grants activities during December 2012:

Department of Water Resources (DWR): The Delta Conservancy received \$150,000 from DWR for the purpose of providing resources to support the five Delta counties in their efforts to assess impacts of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The five Delta Counties will use these funds to conduct an independent review and impact analysis of the BDCP.

Rose Foundation: The Delta Conservancy, in partnership with Sacramento Areas Creek Council, submitted an application and received a \$3,000 grant from the Rose Foundation to support the Creek Week event.

USEPA Environmental Education Grant: The Delta Conservancy partnered with state agencies working in the Delta, local governments, and non-profits organizations to submit a proposal for \$170,000 for a Delta Waterways Stewardship Project to the USEPA. The goal of this proposed project is to increase public awareness and youth knowledge about the Delta waterways and Delta ecosystem. The Delta Conservancy expects to hear if we received the grant by February 2013.

US Fish and Wildlife Foundation Environmental Solution Grant: The Delta Conservancy submitted a proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for \$75,000. The proposed project is for eradication of Arundo donax in the Cache Slough Complex (CSC) and to restore native plants along the waterways where Arundo was removed. The Conservancy is partnering with the Solano Resource Conservation District (SRCD) to build upon work being conducted by SRCD. DWR has expressed interest in coordinating with the Delta Conservancy for a Delta Arundo Control and Restoration Program, and has previously funded projects by SRCD which may include additional funding. This project would enhance current work and contribute toward the development of a Delta-wide program. The Delta Conservancy expects to hear if we received the grant by April 22, 2013.

USDA: The Delta Conservancy submitted a concept proposal for \$100,000 to the USDA to support the Delta Branding Project. The proposed project will develop Delta Brand and

Meeting Date: January 17, 2013  
Page 4

marketing plan to promote Delta speciality crops, the Delta as a destination, and the significance of the Delta to Californians. The Delta Conservancy expects to hear if we have been asked to submit a full proposal by June 2013.

*Federal Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grant:* The Delta Conservancy was invited to submit a full proposal for the Clean Water Act 319(h) Grant. In September 2012, the Delta Conservancy submitted an application for a concept proposal for \$700,000 for the 2013 CWA 319(h) California Nonpoint Source Grant Program Funds. The full proposal is due in January 2013 and will include implementation of management practices for two priority subwatersheds, Roberts Island and Terminous Tract Drain at Highway 12, to reduce pesticide discharge to Delta waterways. If awarded, the Conservancy will begin developing an interagency agreement with the State Water Board in June 2013.

*S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation:* The S.D Bechtel, Jr. Foundation has approved a grant to the Delta Conservancy in the amount of \$250,000 to be used for a Basins Study Proof of Concept project. The Delta Conservancy, in partnership with NewFields/Palantir will demonstrate an innovative analysis approach to assessment of climate change induced changes to system wide water operations. The project will result in a summary of findings and conclusions regarding the value of the new platform over traditional methodologies. The Conservancy is preparing an agreement with NewFields to complete the project.

### **Conservancy Budget Update**

#### *Federal Reimbursement Authority:*

Staff requested a modification in our federal reimbursement authority and other reimbursements for Fiscal Year 2012-2013. The purpose of this modification is to adjust the Conservancy budgeted reimbursement authority to reflect the actual funds received from the Bureau of Reclamation, the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and the Department of Water Resources; and the funds payable to the Water Education Foundation for FY 2012-13.

### **Outreach -Delta Meeting Matrix**

An attached meeting matrix summarizes the most recent events and lists key dates of future meetings.

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